UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/437
5 June 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN CYPRUS

(for the period from 11 December 1996 to 5 June 1997)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 11 December 1996 to 5 June 1997 and brings up to date the record of activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) of 4 March 1964 and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1092 (1996) of 23 December 1996. I shall report to the Council separately on my mission of good offices.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE FORCE

A. Maintenance of the ceasefire and the military status quo

2. During the period under review, the number of serious incidents decreased compared to the previous six months. Nevertheless, the tension along the ceasefire lines remained higher than in the past.

3. Both sides generally respected the ceasefire and the status quo. On a number of occasions, both sides moved forward into the United Nations buffer zone, especially at locations where they dispute the delineation of the ceasefire line. There were frequent discharges of weapons, but only rarely was UNFICYP clearly able to determine the target or the source of the firing. Stone throwing, pointing of weapons and shouting of abuse occurred between the opposing forces, and in some instances at UNFICYP, in those areas of Nicosia where the two sides are in close proximity to each other. Those incidents, although in themselves rather minor, reflect the tension that continued to exist between the two sides along the ceasefire lines.

4. There were a number of shooting incidents. The most serious were two incidents in the area of Louroujina, south-east of Nicosia. On 27 January 1997, the Turkish forces complained that two rifle shots had been fired at a sentry post. On investigation, UNFICYP found a window broken at the post but did not

find the bullets and has not been able to verify the origin of the rounds. In the early-morning hours on 6 February 1997, UNFICYP received a complaint that National Guard intruders had attempted to steal a flag; Turkish Cypriot Security Forces had fired at the intruders, who had withdrawn under covering fire of the National Guard. UNFICYP investigated the scene of the incident at first light and found some blood on the ground. The National Guard reported hearing shots but denied any involvement in the incident. UNFICYP's investigation was not conclusive.

5. Military construction by both sides continued. Of particular note was the continued strengthening of positions by the National Guard in Nicosia near Nicosia International Airport, in the area of the Nicosia Central Prison and along the ceasefire lines east of the city. The Turkish forces continued construction and improvement of positions along the length of the buffer zone. These activities were protested by UNFICYP, but with little effect. In two areas west of Nicosia, the Turkish forces disputed the delineation of the ceasefire line and interfered from time to time with United Nations patrols in the buffer zone.

6. There were again a number of violations of the airspace of Cyprus. In March and April 1997, there were five reports of overflights by Turkish Air Force aircraft, all of which were protested by the Government of Cyprus. In official public statements in May, the Greek Government announced that Greek military aircraft would not enter Cypriot airspace during the planned "Toxotis" exercise, and the Turkish Government announced that the Turkish forces would reciprocate in their exercises scheduled for this year.

7. As previously reported (S/1995/1020, paras. 7 and 10), UNFICYP continued to inspect regularly the underground facilities and park on the Roccas Bastion in Nicosia. There were only minor changes and UNFICYP found no indication that the area is being used for military purposes.

8. UNFICYP continued to monitor the status quo in the fenced area of Varosha. Some buildings continue to be occupied by students. There were again cases of property being removed from buildings; UNFICYP protested these to the Turkish forces. The United Nations holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the maintenance of the status quo in the fenced area of Varosha.

9. On 6 January 1997, the Government of Cyprus announced the purchase of S-300 surface-to-air missile systems. According to official public statements, the missile systems are scheduled to arrive in Cyprus some 16 months after the date of the purchase order, towards the middle of 1998. While the Government emphasized that the missile systems were of a purely defensive nature, the announcement of the purchase drew a strong response from Turkey, including threats to retaliate if the missile systems were deployed. On 10 January, I issued a statement in which, inter alia, I recalled that the Security Council, in its resolution 1092 (1996), had expressed grave concern about the excessive levels of military forces and armaments and the rate at which they were being expanded, upgraded and modernized. I also reminded all sides that the Charter of the United Nations forbids the threat or use of force in situations such as this.

10. Last October, UNFICYP presented to the military authorities on both sides specific proposals for the reduction of tension along the ceasefire line: by: (a) an extension of the 1989 unmanning agreement to include all areas where the military are in close proximity to each other; (b) the prohibition of loaded weapons along the ceasefire lines; and (c) the adoption of a code of conduct, based on the concept of use of minimum force and proportionate response. In its resolution 1092 (1996) the Security Council called upon the parties to accept these measures as a package without delay or preconditions.

11. Despite a total of 40 meetings with both sides at the Chief-of-Staff level, progress has not been possible. On some aspects, a convergence of views was achieved between UNFICYP and one or the other side, but no agreement was reached with both sides on the same subject. Although both sides accepted that the above proposals represent an integrated package, they frequently made the submission of their respective comments contingent upon the other side reciprocating. Even though it was repeatedly made clear that each side was dealing separately with UNFICYP as the impartial broker, who would consolidate the comments of both military authorities into an acceptable compromise package for their final agreement, each side continued to insist that they only respond to individual comments of the respective other side. As a result, the process was extremely slow, and only on 26 May did both sides submit detailed comments and suggestions on all elements of UNFICYP's proposals. UNFICYP is continuing its efforts, with a view to eliciting a positive response from both sides to the entire package of proposals, as called for by the Security Council.

12. UNFICYP's movement in the northern part of the island continued to be restricted, notably in the Kormakiti area where United Nations personnel were refused access to certain areas and restricted in carrying out humanitarian tasks.

13. There are 39 minefields and booby-trapped areas inside the buffer zone and a further 71 located within 500 metres of it. UNFICYP has requested both sides to assist in confirming the scale of the problem before presenting detailed proposals for the removal of those minefields located within the buffer zone.

B. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

14. UNFICYP intensified its efforts to promote and facilitate bicommunal events with a view to increasing communication and cooperation between the two communities and building trust and mutual respect. In this regard, UNFICYP is working closely with interested diplomatic missions on the island. The Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone has been the venue of many bicommunal events held under the auspices of UNFICYP, diplomatic missions or on the initiative of non-governmental and professional organizations from both sides. The Turkish Cypriot authorities continued to insist that the attendance by Turkish Cypriots at such events requires specific authorization in each case. Since late January 1997, such authorization has usually been granted for events in the buffer zone and, though less consistently, for events in the southern part of the island.

15. On 19 April 1997, 437 Turkish Cypriots were able to make a pilgrimage to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca without any restrictions being imposed

by the Government. Unfortunately, a reciprocal pilgrimage to the church of Apostolis Andreas by 600 Greek Cypriots, scheduled for Orthodox Easter on 27 April, was cancelled at the last moment by the Greek Cypriot side because the authorities in the north insisted on the deletion of three individuals from the list of participants.

16. On 19 May, a bicommunal concert by two well-known singers from Greece and Turkey was held under the auspices of the United Nations operation in Cyprus at a soccer field in the buffer zone next to the Ledra Palace checkpoints. Some 3,000 Cypriots from both communities attended the concert, which took place in a completely positive and peaceful atmosphere. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots mixed readily, singing and dancing together and exchanging flowers and addresses. Police from both sides were particularly effective in providing security for the concert.

17. The concert generated a great deal of debate about bicommunal contacts, which certain Greek Cypriot groups opposed on the grounds that Turkish troops were still on the island. A demonstration on 19 May in Nicosia in protest against the bicommunal concert was organized by the Cyprus Motorcyclist Federation and the Pan-Cyprian Anti-occupation Movement and resulted in violent clashes with the police.

18. Demonstrations by Greek Cypriots continued at the Ledra Palace checkpoint in Nicosia with the purpose of dissuading tourists from crossing to the northern part of the island. These demonstrations discouraged some tourists and at times impeded the movement of United Nations and diplomatic personnel. UNFICYP repeatedly called upon the Government to take the necessary measures to ensure that movement through the checkpoint is not impeded or deterred. In contrast, the restrictions imposed in response by the Turkish Cypriots were lifted in late January (see para. 15 above).

19. UNFICYP continued to carry out humanitarian tasks in respect of Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the northern part of the island and Turkish Cypriots in the southern part. There are now 479 Greek Cypriots in the Karpass area and 187 Maronites in the Kormakiti area. There are some 343 Turkish Cypriots known to UNFICYP in the southern part of the island. The living conditions of the Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the northern part of the island have changed little from those reported previously (see S/1996/411, paras. 22-25 and S/1996/1016, paras. 21-22). Of the recommendations arising from the humanitarian review UNFICYP undertook in 1995 (S/1995/1020, paras. 20-25, and annexes), the Turkish Cypriot authorities have maintained improvements in terms of relaxation of restrictions on the freedom of movement of the Greek Cypriots and Maronites introduced in early 1996. But the other recommendations have not been implemented. UNFICYP continues to seek full implementation of the recommendations. UNFICYP's humanitarian work continued to be impeded by the presence of police officials whenever UNFICYP humanitarian officers were interviewing Greek Cypriots in the Karpas area.

20. The aftermath of the intercommunal violence of last summer continued to have an adverse effect upon the Turkish Cypriots working in the southern part of the island or in the buffer zone in the mixed village of Pyla. Unemployment for these Turkish Cypriots remained very high. The Government is paying

unemployment benefits and measures have been taken to extend payments beyond the normal limit. Projects are being explored with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to improve the physical amenities in Pyla and create opportunities for work for otherwise unemployed Turkish Cypriot residents there.

III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

21. UNFICYP continued to act as the intermediary between the two communities and to facilitate cooperation in such areas as the equitable distribution of water and electricity. The water resources on the island are very limited and UNFICYP strives to ensure effective cooperation between the two communities in order to prevent shortages.

22. UNHCR continued to administer a humanitarian programme funded by a voluntary contribution from a Member State. The main areas of cooperation were in sanitation, health, environment, agriculture, veterinary science, rehabilitation of culturally important sites and the Nicosia Master Plan. Regular bicommunal meetings on these matters were held at the UNHCR offices.

23. After a thorough independent review of the programme, UNHCR has decided to terminate its participation in this activity at the end of 1997. It will retain its office in Cyprus to continue implementation of its mandated responsibilities for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

IV. COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS

24. In his last report to the Security Council (S/1996/1016, para. 27), my predecessor mentioned that, despite the substantial work carried out by both sides, no agreement had been reached on the four points contained in his letters to the leaders of the two communities dated 4 April 1996. On 4 December 1996, he addressed a second letter to the two Cypriot leaders, reaffirming the necessity for the two sides to agree on the four specific points as an indication of their determination to make expeditious progress before initiating the procedure to appoint a new third member. In his second letter, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali requested the two leaders to agree urgently on the implementation of five specific measures related to the above-mentioned four points.

25. After a careful review of the issues of the missing persons in Cyprus, I share entirely the views of my predecessor contained in his two aforementioned letters and emphasize that it is of the utmost importance to preserve the suggested approach. I urge the leaders of the two communities to comply with the five specific measures contained in the former Secretary-General's letter dated 4 December 1996.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

26. As of June 1997, UNFICYP comprised 1,173 troops and 35 civilian police. The military personnel were from Argentina (396), Austria (315), Canada (2), Finland (1), Hungary (39), Ireland (32) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (388). The police were from Australia (20) and Ireland (15). In addition, UNFICYP had a civilian complement of 335, of whom 40 were recruited internationally, and 295 locally. The deployment of the Force is shown on the map attached to the present report.

27. In view of the experience gained during the events of August 1996 and the subsequent prolonged state of alert, I have requested the contributors of infantry units to increase their strength by a total of 63 personnel all ranks, bringing UNFICYP's strength to its authorized level.

28. Mr. Han Sung-Joo requested that his appointment as my Special Representative for Cyprus not be extended beyond its expiration in April 1997. I have appointed Mr. Diego Cordovez as my Special Adviser with effect from 28 April 1997 to prepare and assist me in chairing the next rounds of inter-communal talks. Mr. Gustave Feissel continued as Deputy Special Representative and Chief of Mission of the United Nations operation in Cyprus. Brigadier General Ahti T. P. Vartiainen completed his tour of duty as Force Commander and has been succeeded by Major-General Evergisto A. de Vergara with effect from 28 February 1997.

Financial aspects

29. The proposed budget for the maintenance of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998 is currently under consideration by the General Assembly. The cost of maintaining the Force for the 12-month period is estimated at $50,320,400 gross (A/51/755/Add.1). That amount is inclusive of the pledged voluntary contributions of one third of the cost of the Force from the Government of Cyprus and of the $6.5 million contributed annually from the Government of Greece. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP beyond 30 June 1997, the cost of maintaining the Force will be limited to the amount indicated above.

30. As of 13 May 1997, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the UNFICYP special account amounted to $13,326,013, representing some 15 per cent of the assessment for the mission since 16 June 1993. The outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations amounted to $1.6 billion.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

31. During the last six months the situation in Cyprus has been much calmer than in the preceding period. However, there were numerous indications of continuing tension between the two sides.

32. Regrettably, there has been no change in the excessive levels of military forces and armaments in Cyprus and the rate at which they are being expanded, upgraded and modernized. Nor have the military authorities accepted the package

of reciprocal measures proposed by UNFICYP to reduce tension along the ceasefire lines. These are simple practical measures that would not affect the status or delineation of the ceasefire lines, nor would they impair the security of either side. Agreement on these proposals would significantly improve the atmosphere and reduce the potential for violations of the ceasefire and the heightening of tension, which inevitably follows. I strongly urge both sides to reconsider their positions and cooperate with UNFICYP to reach an agreement on this package without further delay.

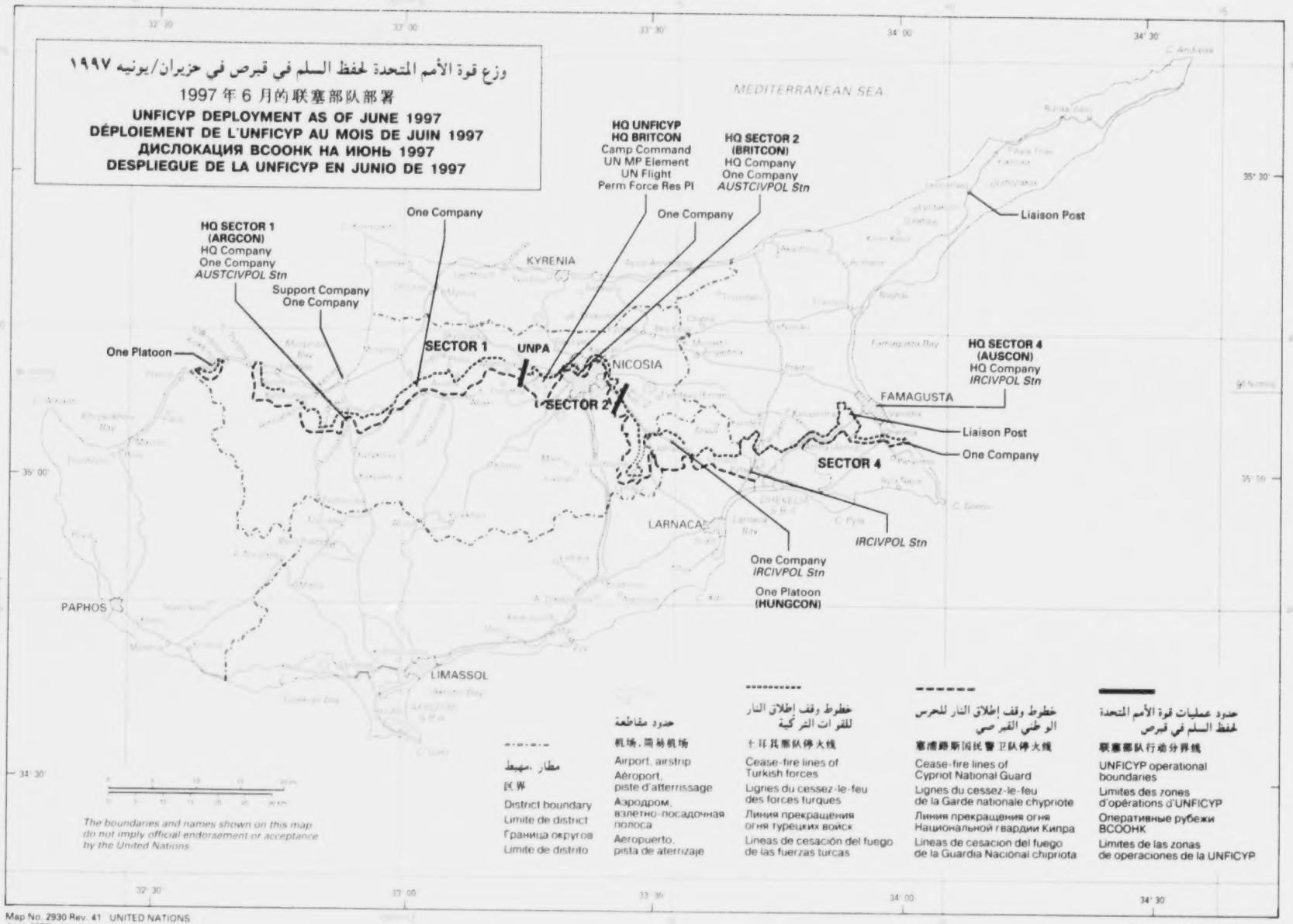
33. UNFICYP intensified its efforts to improve the overall atmosphere through bicommunal activities, which help to overcome misperceptions and anxieties between the two communities. For direct contacts between members of the two communities to take place, the support of UNFICYP or diplomatic missions is still essential. It would be desirable if such contacts could take place without formality and on a regular basis. From time to time, those who promote or participate in bicommunal events encounter pressure and even threats within their own community, making their efforts all the more admirable. I urge the two leaders to send clear messages of tolerance and reconciliation to their publics and to facilitate and encourage direct contacts between the two communities.

34. I believe that UNFICYP's presence on the island remains indispensable in order to maintain the ceasefire between the two sides, which is a prerequisite for achieving the settlement sought by the Security Council. Therefore, I recommend that the Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months until 31 December 1997. In accordance with established practice, I am consulting the parties concerned on the matter and shall report to the Council as soon as these consultations have been completed.

35. With regard to my mission of good offices, my representatives have in recent months engaged in a process of intensive consultations, with a view to preparing the ground for direct talks between the leaders of the two communities. I shall inform the Security Council separately on the preparations for those talks.

36. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops and civilian police to UNFICYP for the steadfast support they have given to this peacekeeping operation of the United Nations. I also wish to thank the Governments that have made voluntary contributions towards the financing of the Force.

37. In conclusion, I wish to express my warm appreciation to Mr. Han Sung-Joo, my former Special Representative, for his dedicated work in the last 12 months. I also wish to pay tribute to Mr. Gustave Feissel, the Deputy Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Brigadier General Ahti T. P. Vartiainen, the former Force Commander, to Major-General Evergisto A. de Vergara, his successor, and to the men and women serving with UNFICYP for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.



Map No. 2930 Rev. 41 UNITED NATIONS
June 1997

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